

CA20N  
DT  
-Z068

3 1761 11969590 6

# Young Cyclist's Guide





**3****Getting Ready to Ride On Your Own****4****A Bike is a Vehicle****6****Use Your Street Sense****7****Signs of Safety****8****Staying Away from Trouble****10****Handling Your Bike****12****Protect Your Head****14****Ride a Safe Bike****16****ABC Quick Check****18****Other Important Information**





Hi, Jasmine !

Hey, Emile,  
how are you  
doing?

O.K....But I have  
a question...

Hold on,  
Emile. Don't  
be so hard  
on your  
parents! I'm  
11. I've only  
ridden on  
my own  
since last  
year. I was  
your age  
when my  
parents started  
to get me  
ready to ride  
on the street.



What do you  
mean.. get  
**READY?** I'm 9.  
I learned to  
ride a two  
wheeler when  
I was six!



How come  
your parents  
let you ride  
by yourself?  
...and on the  
road, too!  
Mine won't  
let me do  
that! It's not  
fair!



Balancing and steering are just  
the **BEGINNING!** There's still  
more to learn!

But I  
just want  
to ride...



Emile, if you learn  
good cycling  
habits now you  
can enjoy riding  
for years



OK. Will you show  
me some of the stuff  
you learned?

Sure, and let's  
see if one of  
your parents can  
come along!





## TIP

The rules  
are tools-  
safety tools.  
Use the  
rules to  
stay safe!

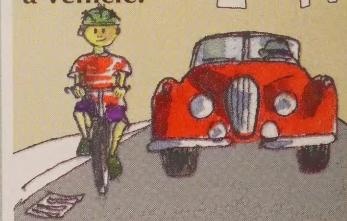


Emile, is a bike a toy or a vehicle?

Um...It's fun to ride...so it's like a toy...



But on the road I will be with trucks and buses and cars ...and it takes you places...so it's like a vehicle.



That means you have to follow rules like other vehicles. Right, Jasmine?



Yes. Those cars are big and the rules help let everyone share the road!



But rules are a drag! I just want to ride!



No, I hate it... but on my bike I'm not playing with anyone else. I can make up my own rules!

**YOW!**

THWUNK

Look at that traffic, Emile. What would happen if all those cars and trucks made up their own rules...went through stop signs, drove on the left side, made sudden turns without warning other drivers with a signal???

We all need the rules,  
the same rules, to stay  
safe.

Rules are just a part of growing up, Emile. Rules keep us safe. But you and I are not ready for a busy road like this one. We need to ride on our neighbourhood streets first.

OK...What do I have to know?



## TIP

Learn street sense by practising good cycling habits on quiet streets.



Hey, Emile: Riding safely means that you have to do two things at the same time: ride and think. Believe it or not, your brain is a safety device, just like your helmet and your brakes.

Safety is about making choices. To make good choices, you need to know how traffic works and how a bike fits in.

Think about the following:

- A bike is smaller, slower, lighter and has less protection than a car... but it is still a vehicle.
- A cyclist needs enough space to avoid hazards.
- If drivers SEE you riding your bike, then they can avoid hitting you.
- If drivers can PREDICT what you are going to do next, then they can avoid hitting you.
- The rules help drivers to see you and to know what you will do next.



## How do you cycle?

Check Yes, No or Sometimes about the following statements:

- I stop at stop signs and red lights.
- I stop to make sure the road is clear before entering a road.
- I get off my bike to cross at a crosswalk or busy street.
- If I ride on the sidewalk I am careful around people walking.
- I ride out from the curb far enough to miss the sewer grate and garbage in the curb (about one metre).
- I ride in a straight line on the right side of the road in the same direction as traffic.
- I turn only after I have checked that the road is clear ahead and behind me. I stop and wait if there is too much traffic.
- I signal my turns early to warn traffic what I will do next.
- I check my brakes before I ride in case I need them.
- I wear my helmet every time I ride, just in case.

Yes No Sometimes

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

If you answered yes to all these questions, then you have street sense.

If you answered no or sometimes to any of these questions, think about them some more, or ask an adult for help. Remember, safety is about making safe choices.

Cycling safety can become a habit with a little practice.



# The Signs of Safety

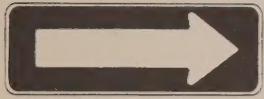
7

Traffic signs are an important way to help us use the roads safely. Road safety depends on cooperation, communication and a couple of important ideas:

**Right of way:**  
allows you to go first

**Yielding:**  
is letting someone else go first

Signs help us decide who gets to go first and who must wait their turn. Signs help us to cooperate when we use the road. Here are a few of the most important signs.



One way: Ride in the same direction as the sign.



No pedestrians or bicycles allowed: Stay away from roads with these signs. They are not meant for cyclists.



Pedestrian Crossover: Stop to let pedestrians cross the street.



Yield: Let other traffic go first.



Stop Sign: Stop put your foot down and look all ways for traffic. Go when it is safe to do so.



Road narrows: Check ahead and behind for traffic. Make sure you do not get squeezed.



Railway Crossing: Obey railway signals. Cross at right angles, or stop and put your foot down and push your bike over the tracks.

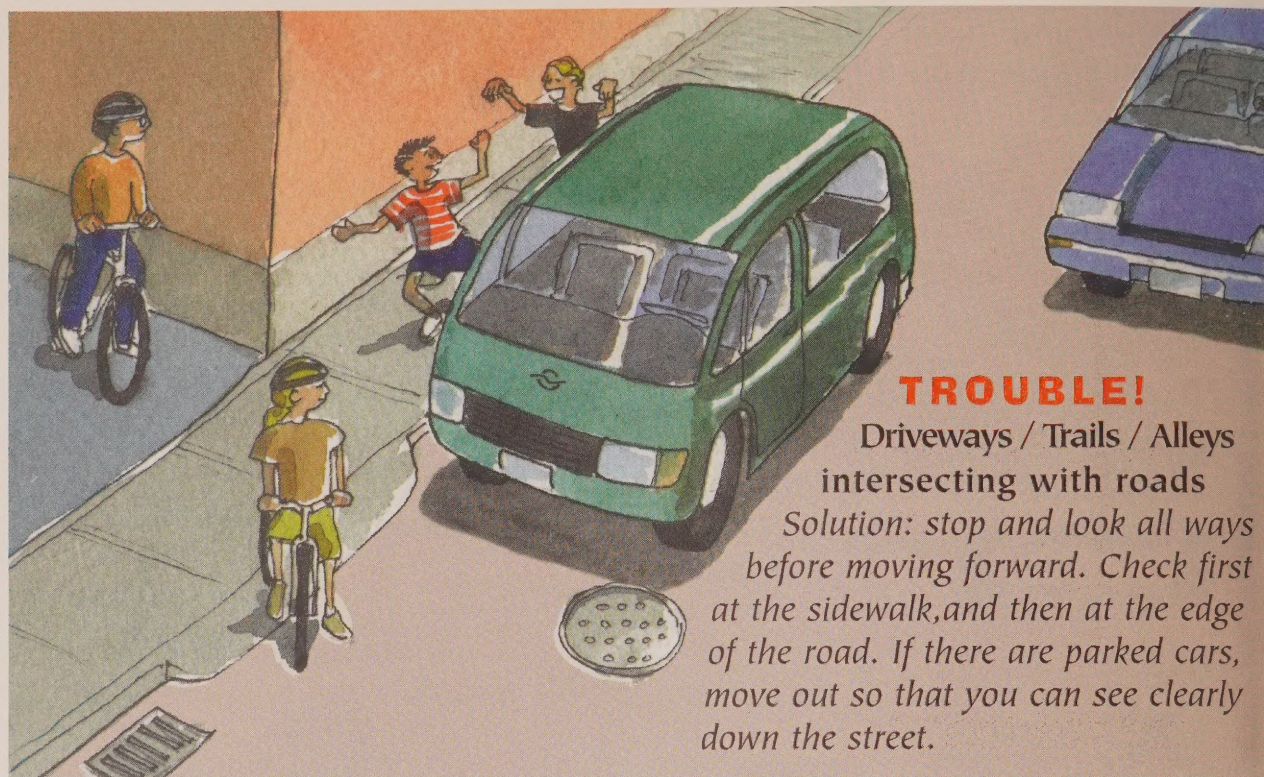
## FIVE SAFETY TIPS

- 1. Ride in a straight line on the right hand side of the road, in the same direction as traffic. (Usually one half to one metre from the curb or from parked cars).**
- 2. Stop at the edge of the road, stop at red lights and stop signs. Look to see if the road is clear. Look all ways.**
- 3. Always look over your shoulder behind you before you turn or move out on the road.**
- 4. Signal - let drivers know what you are going to do next.**
- 5. Look ahead down the road to see if there might be danger ahead.**



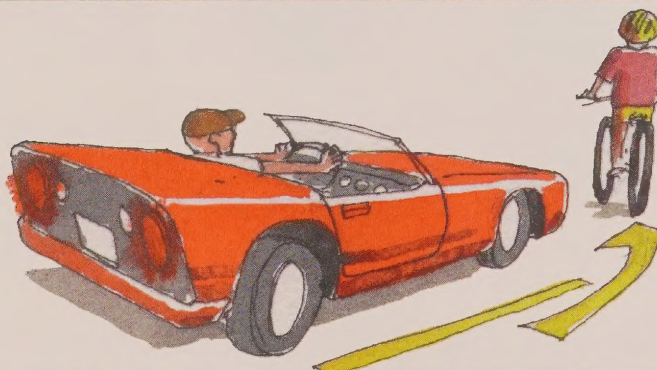
## TIP

Plan ahead.  
Avoid  
danger by  
knowing  
where it  
could be.

**TROUBLE!**

Driveways / Trails / Alleys  
intersecting with roads

*Solution: stop and look all ways before moving forward. Check first at the sidewalk, and then at the edge of the road. If there are parked cars, move out so that you can see clearly down the street.*

**TROUBLE!**

Turning without shoulder checking

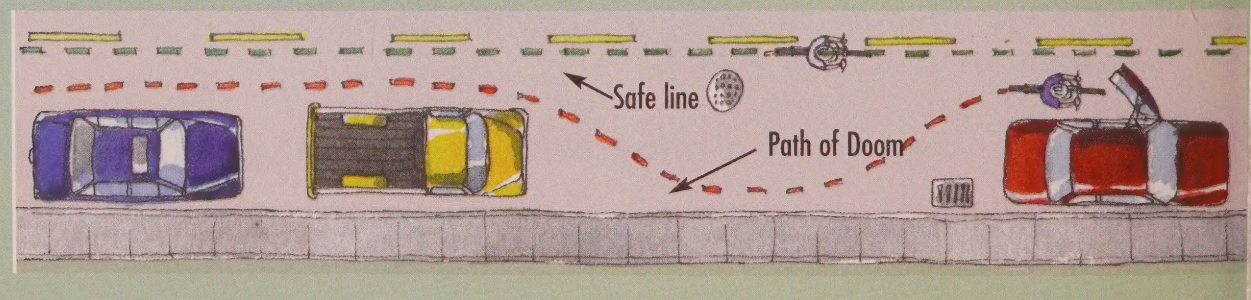
*Solution: practice looking back over your shoulder without weaving your bike. Shoulder check regularly, and especially before you make a turn.*

**TROUBLE!** Weaving (in between parked cars)

*Solution: ride in a straight line, even when there are gaps between parked cars. Motorists can see you if you stay in view.*

**TROUBLE!** Cycling too close to car doors

*Solution: ride beside parked cars as if all the car doors were open. As long as you are riding in a straight line, motorists coming from behind will see you and give you enough space.*







### **TROUBLE!** Sidewalks

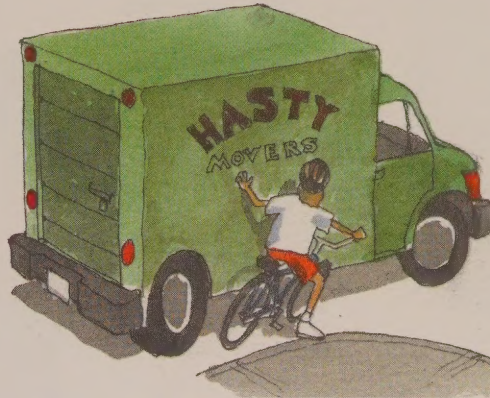
*Solution: go slow. Share the sidewalk. Let pedestrians go first and let them know you are coming. Check driveways for cars turning in, or backing out*



### **TROUBLE!**

*Riding on the wrong side of the street*

*Solution: ride where you are expected to be, on the right, just like other slow moving vehicles. That way motorists can help you stay safe.*



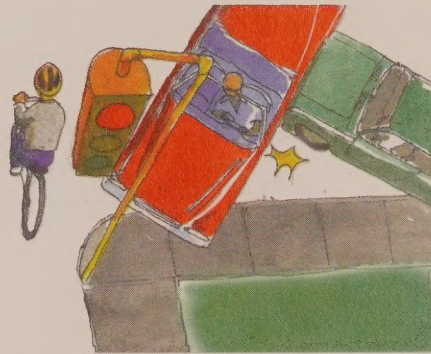
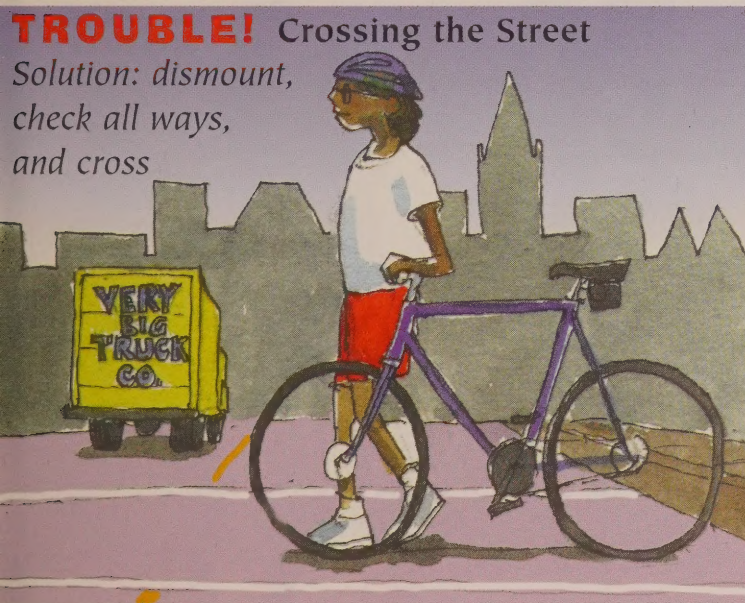
### **TROUBLE!**

*Getting squeezed by a right turning vehicle*

*Solution: stay behind a car as you get close to an intersection - don't try to pass. You can get caught between the curb and the car (or worse, a truck), and get squeezed.*

### **TROUBLE!** Crossing the Street

*Solution: dismount, check all ways, and cross*



### **TROUBLE!** Riding through stop signs and red lights

*Solution: going through a stop sign or red light can be a killer. Make stopping a habit. Practice*

*stopping and starting again. (Clue: always stop with your pedal in a good pushing position, so it is easy to start. You will soon get good at it, and you will feel strong as you speed up from your start.)*



### **TROUBLE!**

*Follow the Leader*  
*Solution: always make traffic decisions for yourself. Traffic changes all the time.*

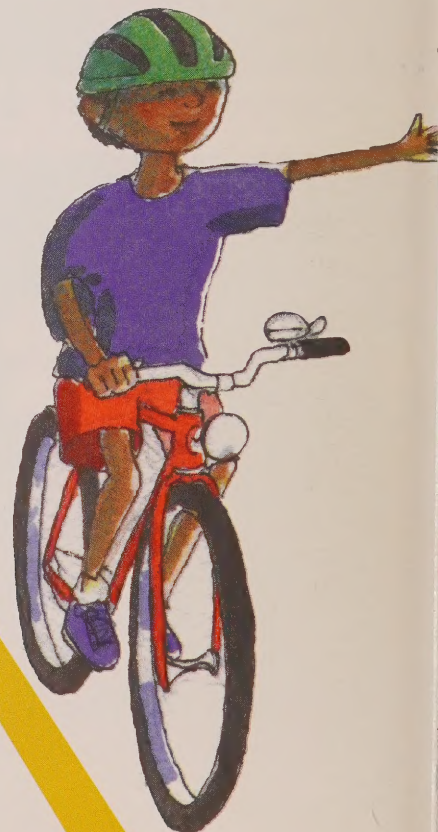


## TIP

Plan ahead.  
Let drivers  
know what  
you are  
going to do  
next.

Wow, cycling on the road  
sounds hard ...I don't  
know if I can do this!

Sure you can!  
Let's practice  
some of these!



### Riding in a straight line

This shows other people you are in control  
away from traffic that has a straight painted

- look ahead, not at the line. Let a friend
- stay relaxed
- keep pedalling
- don't worry if you aren't on the line

### Checking over before you turn

This may save your  
Now ride the straight  
relaxed and keep ped  
awhile. Practice look

### A Note on Gears:

Many kids bikes have gears  
... Practice changing them,  
so that you can use them  
when you need them, like  
climbing a hill or starting  
fast from a stop. Pedaling  
should be easy so you don't  
get tired fast. If you have  
gears learn to use them...  
they make cycling fun.



your bike, and helps them know what you are going to do next. Try this on any pavement. Ride on the line until you can do it without wobbling. Here are some hints:

**Let your parent tell you if you are on the line.**

**At first**

**Check your shoulder**

You need to know what's behind you. Turn your head and try looking back over your shoulder for a second. Stay on the line and you won't steer off the line after you practice for a while over both shoulders.



## Signalling

Making a surprise turn in front of a car is as smart as diving into a shark tank! Signal any turns (but not until you know it's OK to turn by checking over your shoulder first.)

Use the same painted line and method as before. Learn to ride in a straight line with one hand by dropping one arm to your side. (You will need that arm to signal)

When you can do this practice your signals, always starting with a shoulder check.



## Stopping

You need to stop when you ride for lots of reasons. Because it's the law, because it's what's safe, because you need to get a drink of water. Practice stopping and starting again, so that you get good at it, and it becomes easier.

**Change into an easy gear for a smooth fast start.**

**Pedal in power position ready to start.**





## TIP

Wear Your helmet...  
Wear It  
Everytime  
You Ride!...  
It's the  
Law!

## Wear a Helmet Every Time You Ride



You wear a helmet every time you cycle right?

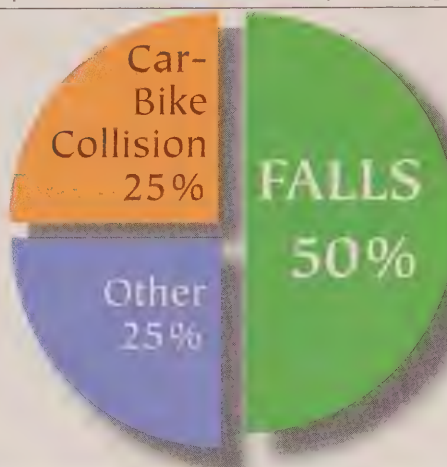
Right. I feel weird without my helmet. But some of my friends tease me about wearing it. They say they'll never crash, or that they can protect their heads if they fall.

Your friends are taking risks. It's the law for a reason you know. You can't always control everything. A crash can happen so fast it's hard to protect yourself.

The only way to protect your head if a crash happens is before the crash by wearing a helmet.

### Bike Crashes

A helmet gives you a real chance of walking away from a collision. Wearing a helmet can reduce your risk of head injury by up to 85%.



Examples of "Other" include bike-bike & bike-pedestrian collisions.

I get the message. How do I wear my helmet, Jasmine... I see cyclists wear them in different ways.





## Wear Your Helmet Right!

Here's an easy way to put it on so it protects you:

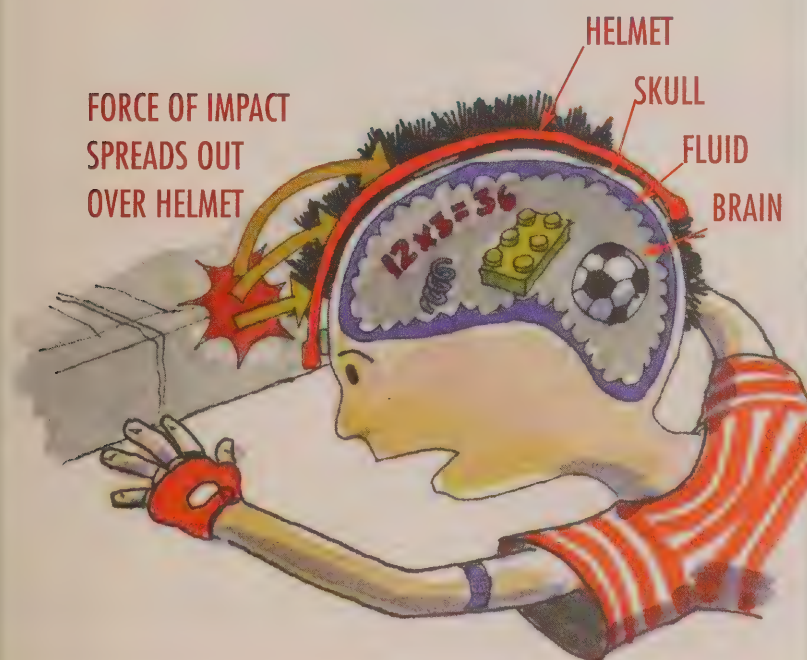


### The Helmet Salute Practice It!

- the edge of the helmet should be two fingers above the eyebrows to protect the forehead
- straps should meet in a V shape just below the ears
- one finger should fit between the chin and the chin strap

Get Help to Adjust your Helmet!

### OFFICIAL X-RAY OF EMILE'S BRAIN BEING PROTECTED BY A HELMET.



Helmets Protect your Head and your Brain - here's how...

A helmet works by absorbing the force of the impact and spreading it out over the whole helmet. The impact on your head and your brain is reduced.

Your skull is hard, but it is not very thick (about the thickness of three pennies stacked up). You can crack your skull just by hitting your head on the ground after falling off your bike.

Your brain is floating in a sack of fluid inside your skull. When you hit your head, your brain crashes around in the fluid against the sides of your skull, like a boat crashing against a dock in a storm. Your brain can be

bruised and swell up. It can bleed. The hundreds of connections between different parts of the brain can be ripped apart.

Wearing a helmet reduces how much force your skull must take, and how much your brain will crash around inside your skull if you crash and hit your head.



## TIP

Ride a bike  
that fits....  
Ride a bike  
that is  
legal.



That helmet salute is easy to remember. But what about the bikes? Remember Kyle last summer when he rode his brother's old bike?...

...And he could hardly reach the pedals or handlebars and the brakes didn't work...

...then he smacked into the curb trying to avoid the ice cream truck!



He broke his collar bone didn't he? And he had a wicked headache which would have been something worse if he hadn't been wearing a helmet.

His parents bought him a new helmet and a bike that fit after that!

## Making sure your bike fits before you buy it

### Frame Size

Both feet should be flat on the ground when straddling the top tube of the bike. There should be space between the crotch and the top tube.

### Seat Height

When sitting on the bike seat, you should be able to touch the ground with both feet. Touching with your toes is OK.

### Frame Length

For most purposes a cyclist should reach the handlebars with a gentle lean. Avoid stretching the back and shoulders.

### Growing into a bike

Ask the sales staff to show you how high the seat and handlebars can be raised to see how the bike can adapt as you grow.

### Brake levers

If your bike has handbrakes, make sure the levers are adjusted for your size of hand so you can reach them and pull them strongly.



# Make Your Bike Legal!

## Equipment required by law

### 1. Helmet

Cyclists under 18 must wear a helmet. Helmets are strongly recommended for cyclists over 18.

### 2. Lights and Reflectors

A white light mounted on front of your bike, a red reflector on the back at night.

### 3. Bell or Horn

### 4. Reflective Tape

White reflective tape on the front forks, red reflective tape on the rear stays.

## Recommended equipment

### 5. Rack or Basket

Keeps your hands free for steering.

### 6. Water Bottle and Cage

### 7. Wear shoes that cover your toes.





## TIP

Check your bike before you ride. Ask for help from an adult to fix or adjust your bike.



Once you have a bike that works you have to keep it that way. Parts have to be fixed or replaced. There are a lot of things to check, such as brakes and tires.

Sometimes I have to pump up my tires, or my brakes squeak, or my handlebars are loose

You've got it! I have an easy way to remember what to check...

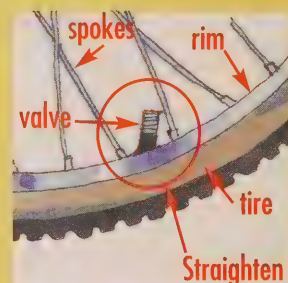
## Check Your Bike with the ABC Quick Check

ABC Quick Check is an easy way to remember what parts of your bike you need to check in a basic safety inspection. Practice ABC Quick Check so that you can do it in about 45 seconds before you leave on your ride. *Please note: tips below with an **M** beside them will need some mechanical skill, and special tools. You may decide to have the problem fixed at a bike store.*

### "A" is for Air

Check your tires and wheels.

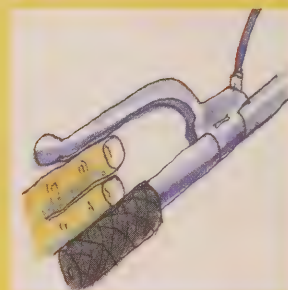
- ☐ Do the tires have enough air? Check the side of the tire for correct pressure.
- ☐ Is the tube valve sticking straight out of the rim? If not, let the air out, tug the tire around so the valve is straight, and then pump up the tire.
- ☐ Are the wheels true? True means spinning without wobbling. If they wobble check for loose or broken spokes. **M**
- ☐ Is there any looseness in the ball bearings in the hub? Check by holding the wheel and trying to move it from side to side. If there is any looseness you need to get the hub mechanism at the axle adjusted. **M**
- ☐ Is the tread or sidewall of the tire badly worn? Replace if necessary.



### "B" is for Brakes and Bars

Check the **brakes**.

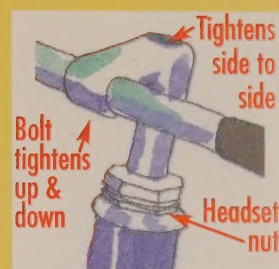
- ☐ Are the brake levers far enough from the handlebars (at least two fingers' width when pulled)?
- ☐ Are the levers easy enough to reach to pull hard?
- ☐ Are the brake pads touching only the rim of the wheel and not the tire? Are the pads too worn?
- ☐ Do the brake pads grab the rim effectively? Standing beside your bike, pull the front brake only and push forward on the handlebars. The front wheel should lock up and the back wheel should leave the ground. Then pull the back brake only and walk forward, the back wheel should lock and skid along the ground.
- ☐ Are the cables worn or frayed?





Also check the **handlebars**.

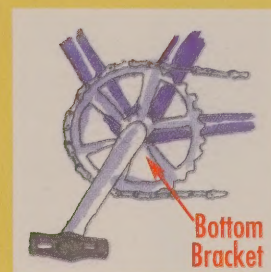
- ☐ Is the headset loose (the headset is where the handlebars attach to the frame)? Pull both the brakes and rock the bike back and forth. If there is any looseness then the ball bearing casing needs tightening. Tighten the nut where the handlebar stem meets the head tube.
- ☐ Are the handlebars loose, either from side to side or up and down? Hold the front wheel between your knees and try to twist the handlebars side to side. If loose tighten the bolt at the top of the stem. Try to twist the handlebars up and down. If loose tighten the bolt where the stem attaches to the handlebars.



## "C" is for **Chain and Crank**

Check the drive train.

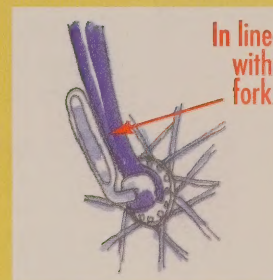
- ☐ Is the chain on and lubricated?
- ☐ Do the pedals spin freely?
- ☐ Are the gear derailleurs in the correct position?
- ☐ Is there any looseness in the bottom bracket where the axle is that attaches the pedals and the cranks to the frame? If there is any looseness, the bracket should be tightened as soon as possible. **M**



## "Quick" is for **Quick Release**

Check the nuts or the levers that clamp the wheel axles to the forks.

- ☐ Are the nuts or levers on tight?
- ☐ Are the levers protected by positioning them flush with the forks?



## "Check" is for a **Final Check Over**

- ☐ Lift the bike several inches off the ground and drop it. Listen for loose parts. Tighten as necessary.
- ☐ Try your brakes as you ride off.

**ABC Quick Check is a smart way to keep your bike in good shape and you safe.**

## Get into the habit!

How do you remember all this stuff?!



Don't expect to learn it all in one day, Emile. And having an adult around helps!



## TIP

Checking  
your bike  
helps you  
stay safe.

## Tips on Buying a Helmet

### *Check for Fit Before You Buy.*

Always take a helmet out of the box and check to see if it fits before you buy it. It is better if the person who will be using the helmet is there to try the helmet on.

### *Price*

Helmets range in price from \$10 to several hundred dollars. If they have an approved sticker from one of the testing agencies (CSA, ASTM, Snell, ANSI, BSI, SAA), then they will protect your head. The more expensive helmets are lighter, cooler, and have easier straps. But all helmets will protect your head if they are worn properly.

### *Different Sizes*

Helmets are made to fit different sized heads. There is a style for children under 5 that covers the ears, and has been approved by the Canadian Standards Association. As soon as children start riding on bike seats, in bike trailers, or on a tricycle they should be wearing a helmet. Children over 5 and adults have three basic sizes to choose from: small, medium and large. Some manufacturers also sell extra large sizes.

### *Remember the Pads*

The key to good fit is in the pads that come with a helmet. The different width pads allow you to make the helmet fit your head so that it does not wobble around.

### *Check the Straps*

On many helmets the straps will slide out of position, forcing you to readjust the straps regularly. Some helmets have buckles that clip the straps into place. These require less adjustment, but often cost more.

### *Don't Buy a Used Helmet*

Do not buy a helmet second-hand, from a garage sale, for example. You do not know if the helmet has been used in a crash. Helmets are designed to work in one crash only and then should be replaced.

### *Only Bike Helmets for Cycling*

Hockey helmets cannot be used for cycling. They are not designed to absorb the kinds of impacts you receive from crashing and hitting your head.

## The Helmet Law in Ontario

Cyclists under 18 are required by law to wear an approved bicycle helmet when riding a bike on a roadway or sidewalk. The law was passed on October 1, 1995. Some communities in Ontario have passed by-laws requiring cyclists under 18 to wear helmets wherever they ride.

An approved bicycle helmet is one that has been tested for use by cyclists by one of the following testing agencies:

- Canadian Standards Association (CSA),
- Snell Memorial Foundation,
- American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM),
- American National Standards Institute (ANSI),
- British Standards Institute (BSI),
- Standards Association of Australia (SAA).

Other kinds of protective helmets, such as hockey helmets, are not acceptable.

Parents can be charged if they knowingly allow their children to ride without a bicycle helmet.

All cyclists should wear a bike helmet when they ride. It reduces the risk of brain and head injury in the event of a crash or collision.

## Keep Your Bike Secure!

Remember: always lock your bike to something solid, even if you are going into a store for a second, or into your house.



## These are the Rules of the Road

The rules of the road are written down in a law called the *Highway Traffic Act* (HTA). Here are some of the important rules cyclists should know:

1. A bicycle is a vehicle and as a cyclist, you have the same rights and responsibilities as other road users (HTA 1).\*
2. You must stop at red lights (HTA 124) and stop signs (HTA 136), and travel in the designated direction on one way streets (HTA 153).
3. A bicycle is a slow vehicle and must travel as far to the right as practicable (HTA 147), except when preparing for a left turn or passing. Ride out from the curb far enough to maintain a straight-line path.
4. You may use any part of a lane if your safety requires it. Never compromise your safety for the convenience of a motorist behind you.
5. Stop for pedestrians at crosswalks (HTA 120), and walk your bike across crosswalks (HTA 144(29)).
6. Stop for school buses when the upper red lights are flashing and the stop arm is out [HTA 175(12)].
7. Stop two metres behind streetcar doors and wait until the passengers have boarded or reached the curb (HTA 166).
8. You cannot attach yourself to a vehicle to hitch a ride (HTA 178).
9. You cannot cycle on expressways or freeways, or on roads where "No Bicycle" signs are posted (HTA 185).
10. Cyclists must identify themselves when stopped by the police for breaking traffic laws. You must give the officer your correct name and address (HTA 218).

\*The numbers after HTA relate to the section of the *Highway Traffic Act* that deals with that rule.

### Off-Road Rules of the Trail

- Leave no trace. Ride on open trails only.
- Plan ahead. Be prepared for breakdowns. Take enough food and water.
- Wear a helmet. Control your bicycle.
- Always yield to hikers and horse riders.
- Never spook animals.
- Be friendly to everyone. Lend a hand.

## Tips for Motorists

1. Bicycles are vehicles and cyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as other road users.
2. Cyclists are expected to ride on the right, but they are allowed to use any part of a lane if their safety warrants it, for example, to avoid a pothole, or to avoid being hit by an opening car door.
3. Generally, cyclists need a metre on either side of them as a safety zone. Do not pass too close. If the lane is too narrow to share, change lanes to pass.
4. Check your blind spot before opening a car door. A cyclist could be there.
5. When turning right, check the curb to ensure you do not cut off a cyclist.
6. Obey all the traffic rules, including speed limits, especially in places where children might be, such as neighbourhoods, parks, schools, and playgrounds. Give yourself and a cyclist the chance to avoid a collision.
7. Remember, children are small and hard to see. Be a safety partner.

### Next Steps: From Your Neighbourhood to the Great Beyond

As you can see from the information in this guide there is a lot to learn about riding a bike safely. There are several stages cyclists usually go through as they grow up:

- Riding a tricycle / riding with training wheels
- Learning how to balance and control a two-wheeler
- Riding in the park, on trails, and on the sidewalk
- Riding on the road in the neighbourhood
- Riding on the road on busy streets

Each stage needs different bike handling and thinking skills. When you start riding on the road, we encourage you to enroll in a Kids CAN-BIKE course to learn more about street sense, and what makes a good cyclist. Think About It! Contact the OCA to find out about cycling training opportunities near you see the back page for more information.



Contact information  
Ministry of Transportation:

1-800-268-4686

website:  
[www.mto.gov.on.ca](http://www.mto.gov.on.ca)

This publication is produced in  
cooperation with the Ontario Cycling  
Association.

The OCA is a non-profit membership  
organization whose mission is to  
make Ontario's cycling environment  
safe, fair and accessible for all.

To find out more about the OCA visit  
our website at:

[www.ontariocycling.org](http://www.ontariocycling.org)

e mail us at [info@ontariocycling.org](mailto:info@ontariocycling.org)  
or call us at 416-426-7242.

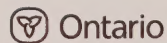
Mailing Address:

1185 Eglinton Ave. E.,  
Suite 408,  
North York ON M3C 3C6.



Road Safety

It starts  
with you



90K PR 00/05  
ISBN 0-7778-8103-9